

flames spread like lightning, and before the first firemen arrived from six blocks away, the entire building was burning fiercely, every floor was on fire, and flames were shooting from hundreds of windows in each of the four sides.

Three sides of the building were bounded by streets that elsewhere would be called alleys. Rising on all sides were immense sky-scrapers.

Even if they stood with their backs against the buildings on the opposite sides of the streets, the firemen were forced to approach within thirty feet of the inferno that raged about them.

Alarm followed alarm, until three thousand firemen were fighting—and suffering.

Flames rose, and billowed hundreds of feet in the air, cutting surrounding sky-scrapers in a frame of dull, wicked-looking red.

As the morning progressed, hundreds of thousands of men and women employed in the financial district, began disgorging from subway, elevated and surface lines. They tried to force through the fire lines, half mad with hysterical curiosity, altumbling walls were falling about them.

More than a thousand policemen, with fire lines drawn, were required to fight them back.

Scores of buildings in the vicinity were ordered closed by the police and firemen, and thousands of men and women thus denied access to their places of business, poured to the fire, and tried by every method to get inside the

fire lines.

At 8:30 a great section of the Equitable walls facing on Broadway crashed into the street. Another section fell at 8:35.

At 8:56 Fire Chief Kenlon sounded a "five borough" alarm, bringing to a fire for the first time in the history of New York, every piece of fire apparatus in every borough of the metropolis.

It was feared at this time that the flames were going to spread, and that a frightful conflagration would ensue.

Only a few blackened, stricken walls are left of the Equitable Life "palace" now, and even these are wavering, shaking, likely to crash in ruins at any moment.

And over the debris inside, firemen are crawling, looking for bodies, hoping only to know just who has fallen a victim of the flames.

They are risking their lives. If the walls fall they are doomed.

The firemen of New York are doing their duty.

The fire was accompanied by wonderful rescues and heroic deeds on the part of the firemen, who worked in a temperature below freezing. A temperature that froze the water as it came from the hoses, and that caked the suffering firemen from head to feet in solid ice.

Fire Chief Kenlon said today that the suffering endured by his men was a thing he had never dreamed of, far less seen before. Men came from the blazing building scarcely able to move on ac-